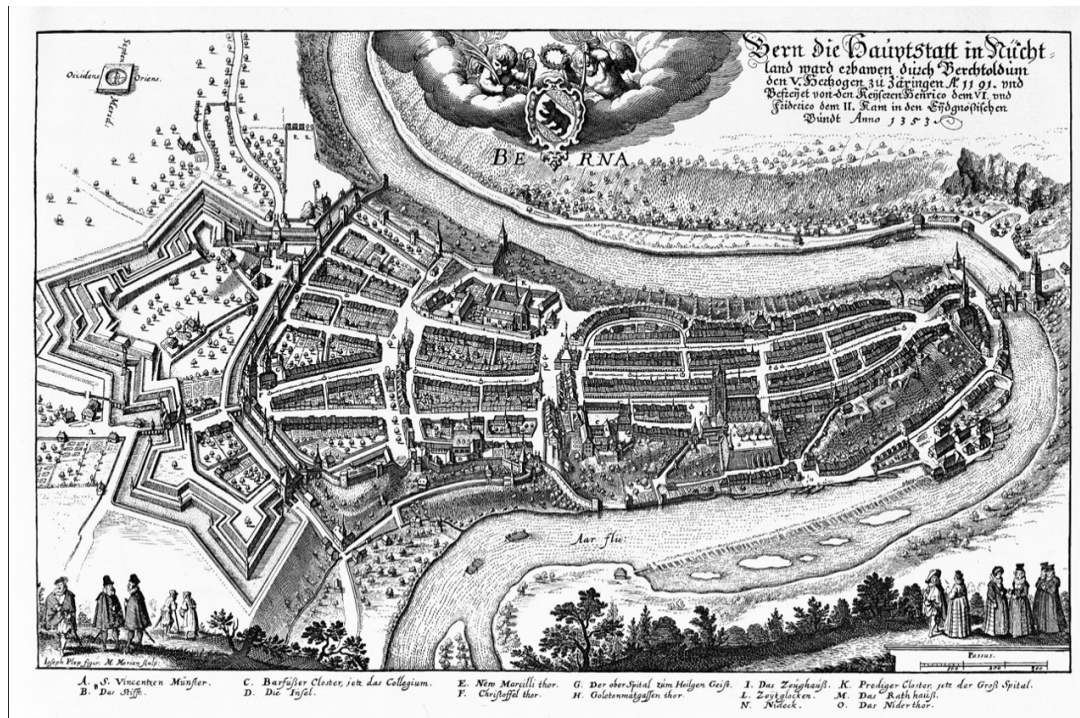


(Written) language in Early Modern Bern (Switzerland)

Christa Schneider, University of Bern

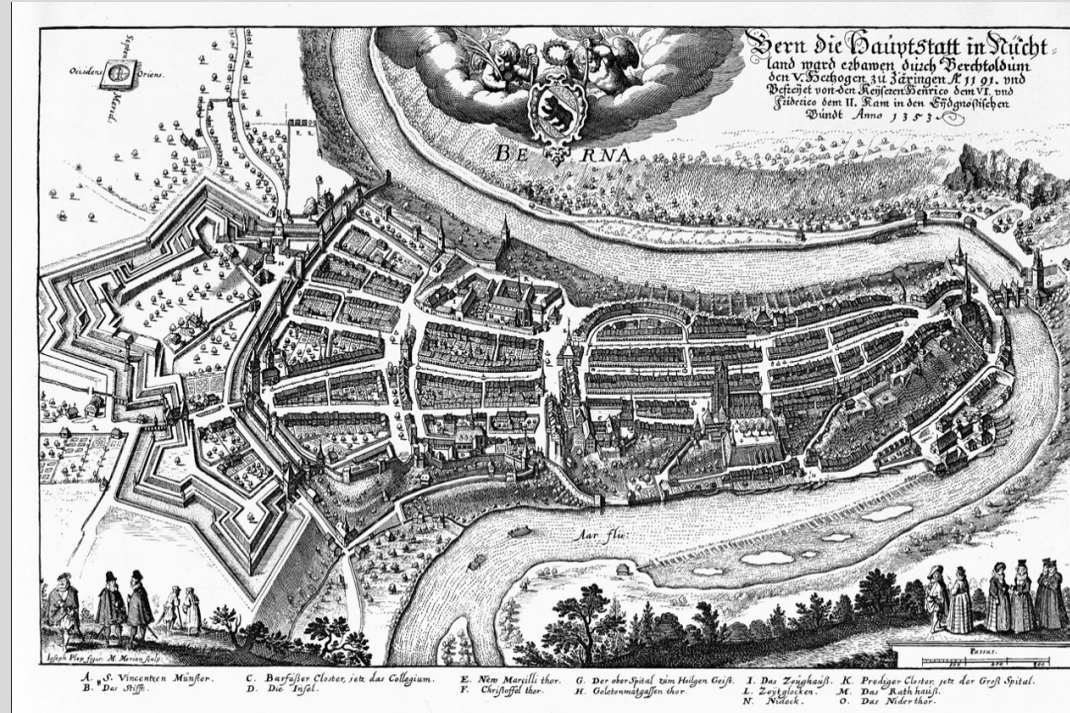


- Introduction – Bernese (Language) History
- The Corpus – The Bernese tower books (Berner Turmbücher)
- The research project
- Towards a first case study
 - The special circumstances of the Bernese tower books
 - Intra-writer variation in legal documents
- Next steps

- Bernese (Language) History
 - Bern was founded in 1191, free imperial city in 1218
 - Growing territory until the end of the Ancien Regime, subdued 1798 by the French
 - Protestant Reformation in 1528
- Spoken language: several rural and urban dialects (vgl. Sonderegger 2003: 2849), varieties of Bernese Swiss German; French
- Written language: regionally different forms of old-alemannic written languages
- Not tradition of dialect writing

The corpus

- The Bernese tower books
 - Protocols of criminal processes recorded in the towers of Bern
 - Chronological summaries of statements of arrested persons and witnesses, also verdicts and executions
 - Often recorded under torture
 - Protocols often influenced by the writers

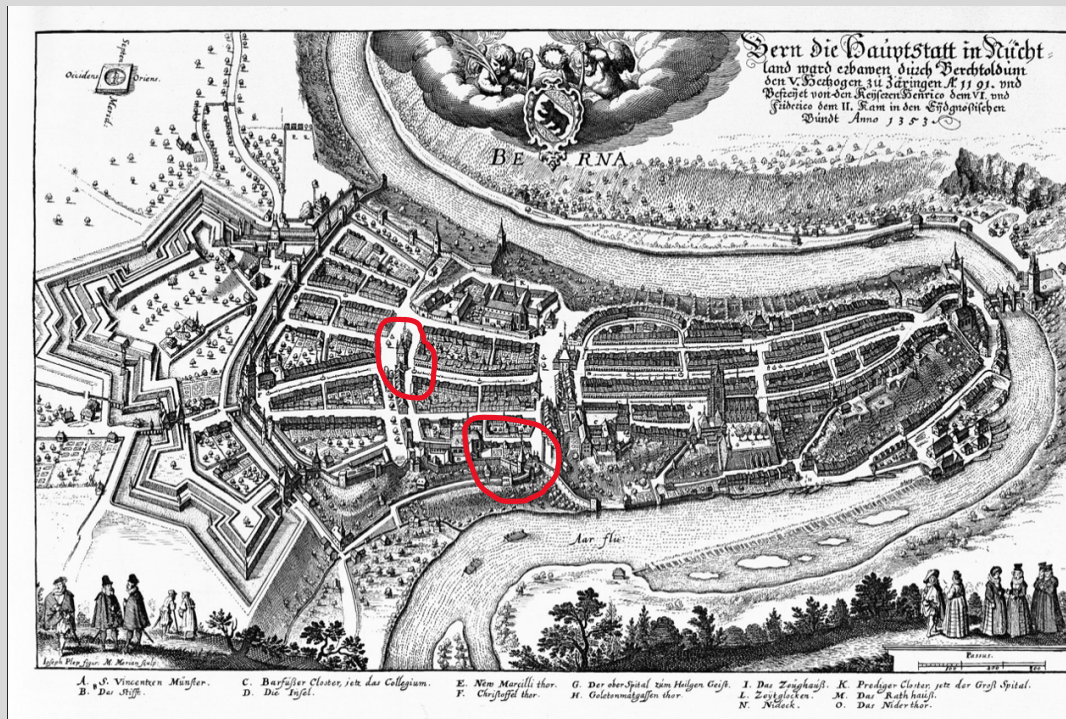


The corpus

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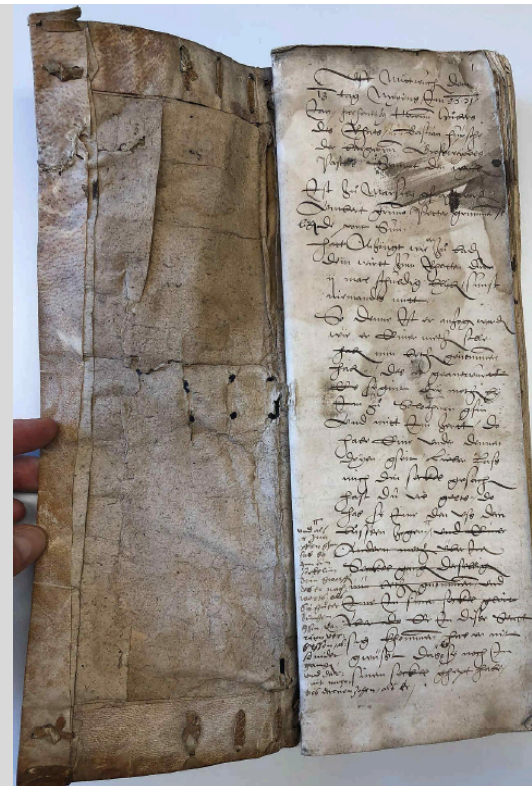


The Corpus

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- The Bernese tower books
 - Accessible in the Bernese state archives
 - Protocols from 1547 to 1798
 - Approx. 300'000 pages on 11 running meters
 - Handwritings, exclusively in a Kurrent



- The Bernese tower books
 - Current state of research (Adam 2018)
 - Only 17th century, quantitative approach:
 - 400 criminal cases, 60% of the delinquents are male
 - Crimes: 32% theft, smuggling and fraud, 32% rebellion, treason, missabuse of authority, 24% offences against sexual integrity like adultery, rape or sodomy, 10% offences against religious foundations like blasphemy, witch trials and assault (murder, robbery)
 - Verdicts: 40% deportation, 30% physical punishment, 20% penance, 10% death penalty

- Research questions and intended analyses
 - Concerning the written language: Was there an official language in use and if yes, does it resemble to any other official language?
 - Concerning the use of dialect: What role does Bernese Swiss German play in terms of the written language? What can be said about the Bernese dialect of that times and how is it represented in the protocols? Which function does the use of dialect bear?
 - Concerning the writers: Which traces did they leave behind?
 - Concerning language history: Which additional information can be taken out of the Bernese tower books to benefit to local language history?

- Currently
 - Digitisation of manuscripts (15'000 pages with *ScanTent*)
 - Transcription and annotation with *Transkribus*, incl. optimisation of handwritten text recognition
 - Training some more specific language models for NER and POS with spaCy and Flair
 - First quantitative analyses on a first data set

Towards a first case study

- The special circumstances of the Bernese tower books
- Identities of writers are certain, allows for intra-individual analyses

Ostermontagsbesatzung
Dienstag 27. Martij 1665.

In einem Schuttschreiben verordnet Bern.
Herr Antoni von Strafenried.
Im Inneren im Pfister Viertel.

Herr Christoff von Strafenried.
Im Schniden Viertel.

Herr Hans Jacob Dücher.
Im Metzgeren Viertel.

Herr Daniel Grisching.
Im Herberen Viertel.

Herr Vincent Thürler.
Statt Schreiber.

Gabriel Stroz.
Stroz Schreiber.

Daniel Im Hof.
Bricht Schreiber.

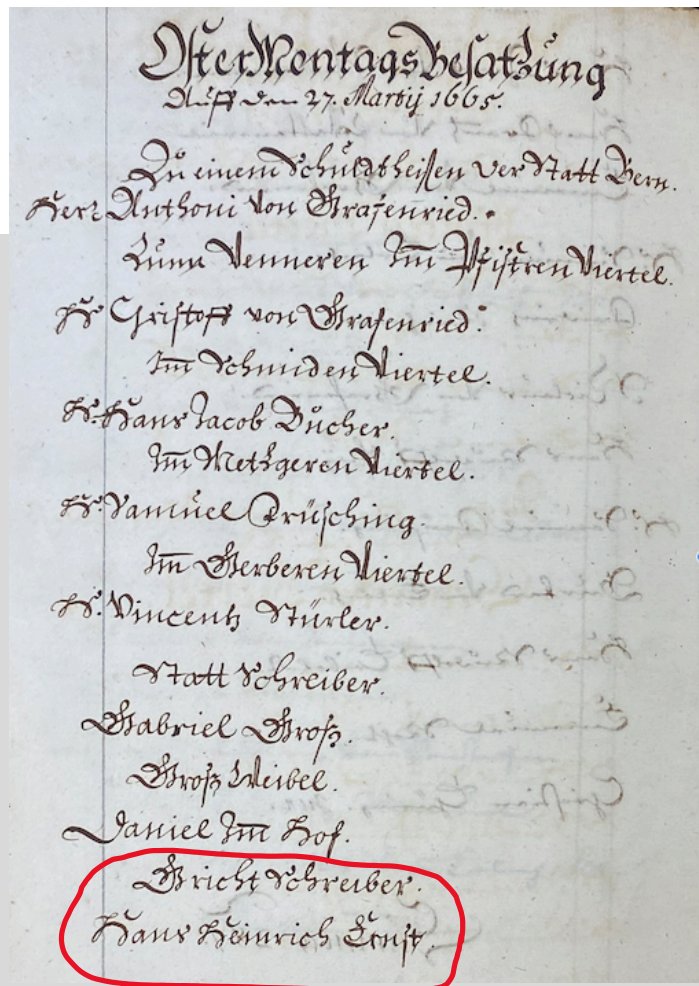
Hans Heinrich Ernst

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Towards a first case study

- The special circumstances of the Bernese tower books
- Identities of writers are certain, allows for intra-individual analyses

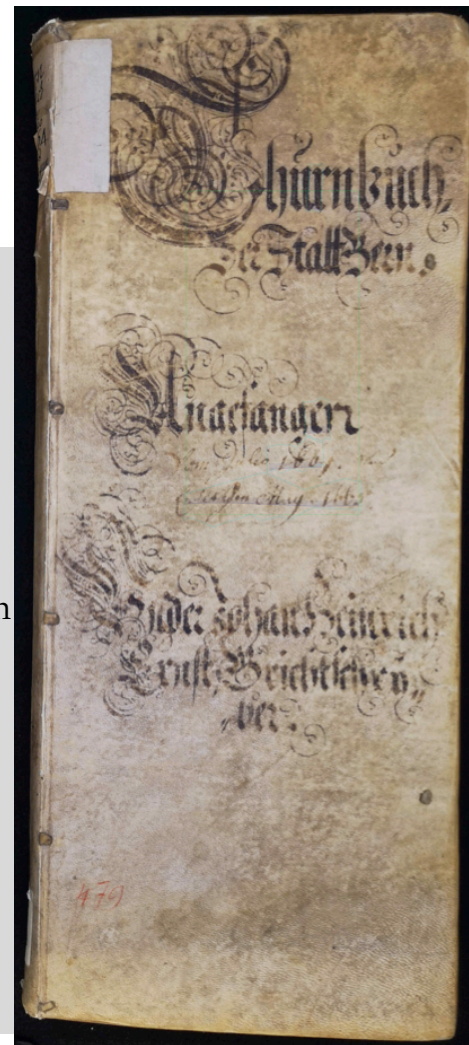


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Towards a first case study

- Hans Heinrich Ernst
 - Tower book 479 (1665)
 - Contains a table of content done by the writer
 - Well trained writer who also elaborated a categorisation for the cases he protocolled
 - Writers background currently examined

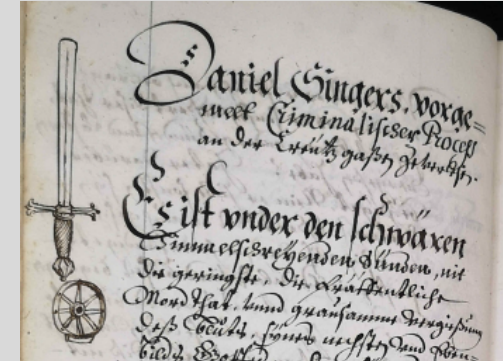
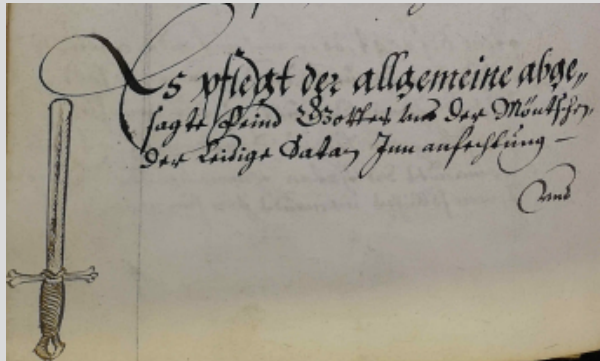


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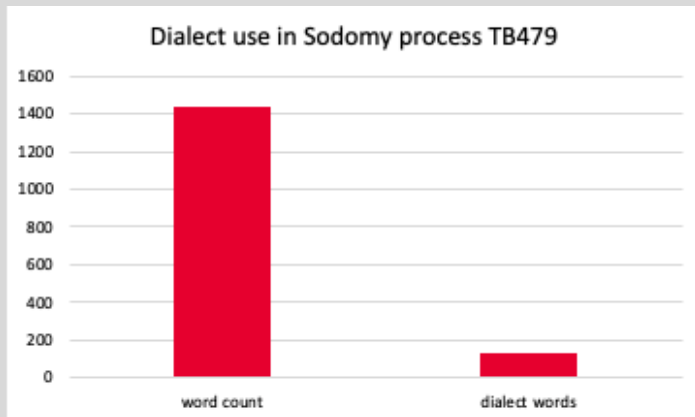
Towards a first case study

- Three major processes in tower book 479
 - Sodomy: Samuel Schnyder and Abraham Roder
 - Theft: Rudolf Schaffner
 - Murder: Daniel Singer



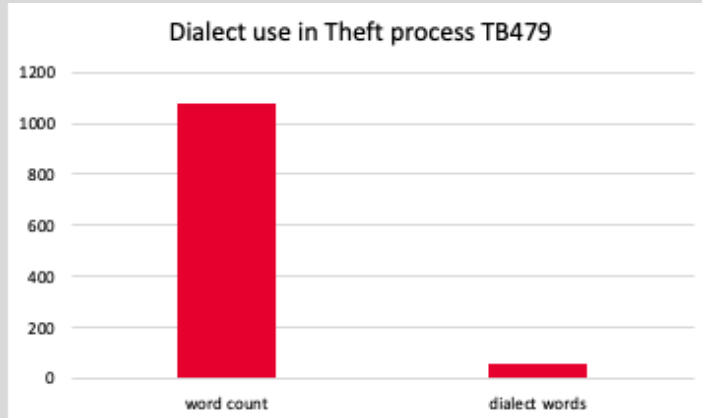
Towards a first case study

- How much dialect is used?
 - Sodomy: Samuel Schnyder and Abraham Roder
 - Focus on examination part:



Towards a first case study

- How much dialect is used?
 - Theft: Rudolf Schaffner
 - Focus on examination part:



Towards a first case study

- Why this difference in dialect use?
 - Both processes in 1665 (Sodomy in March, Theft in April)
 - Same writer
 - Other possible reason:
 - Age of delinquents
 - Social status of delinquents
 - Topic

- Why this difference in dialect use?
 - Topic
 - Sodomy: A deadly sin, process contains moral instructions
 - Verdict: Abraham Roder sentenced to death, Samuel Schnyder deportation from the state of Bern and its neighbouring states
 - Theft: Considered a „smaller“ crime, list of stolen goods → dialect
 - Confession under heavy torture
 - Verdict: Flogging and deportation from the state of Bern

- Why this difference in dialect use?
 - Social status of delinquents
 - Sodomy: Both delinquents mentally disabled, little to no education, orphanage
 - 75% dialect words in Samuel Schnyders examination
 - Theft: Delinquent is educated and holds a profession, citizen of Bern

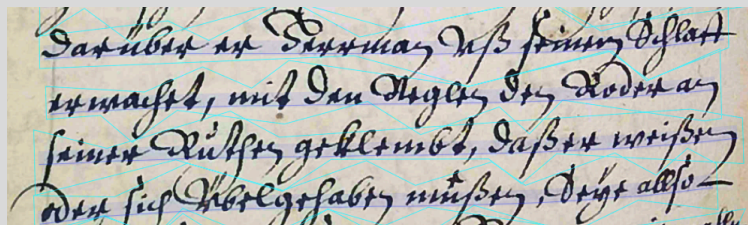
Towards a first case study

- Why this difference in dialect use?
 - Age of delinquents
 - Sodomy: Delinquents in their early 20ties
 - Theft: Delinquent in his early 30ties

- Take a closer look at the official language. Is it similar to others?
- Include multilingualism: Role of French and Latin?
- Language history: More research necessary, not yet an overview
- The writer(s): Where did they come from? Where were they educated? Community of practice?
- Currently: Training NER model to find names and places

Thank you very much!

- Prozess wegen Sodomie, 1664



1-28 darüber er Herrman uß seinem schlaff

1-29 erwacht, mit den neglen den Roder an

1-30 seiner ruthen geklembt, daß er weißen

1-31 oder sich übelgehaben müssen, seye allso

Auswertung zu „weißen“

(Verb: Infinitiv *winseⁿ* / *weissen*, 3. Pers. Sg. Präs. Akt.)

winseⁿ 16,698, weisseⁿ ▲

1. auf bestimmte Weise (in hohen Tönen)

schreien, kreischen

a) von Menschen, (und so gedacht)

a) deutlicher schrill und laut, gellen, (auf-)heulen, namentlich vor Schmerz, Angst oder Trauer

p) deutlicher verhalten, jammern, aufseufzen, stöhnen, wimmern, auch weinen

Quelle: Schweizerisches Idiotikon Band 16, 698, <https://digital.idiotikon.ch/idtkn/id16.htm#page/160697/mode/1up>

Form im Idiotikon vorhanden, Element des dialektalen Wortschatz der Deutschschweiz. Auch heute noch im Berndeutschen belegt, eher Emmental/Oberaargau, zeigt Dialekteinfluss in der Berner Kanzleisprache. Nachweis für Produktivität des Staubschen Gesetz (n vor Frikativ fällt aus, vorheriger Vokal wird zu Diphthong wie in Fenster/Fäischter). Heute aus dem Stadtberndeutschen verschwunden → Erste Aussage zum Staubschen Gesetz in der Frühen Neuzeit.

- Prozess wegen Sodomie, 1664

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